

# 24 Hours in the Life of a Swiss Cuckoo Clock

**Scenography for the exhibition *24 Hours in the Life of a Swiss Cuckoo Clock - 24 Heures dans la Vie d'un Coucou Suisse***

**Project designed by Marina Khémis and Shaima Abdelazim**



©Michel Brunelle, photographe

This project is an itinerant scenography for the exhibition *24 Hours in the Life of a Swiss Cuckoo Clock*, presenting a series of 24 Swiss cuckoo clocks designed by students and professional designers from HEAD Geneva.

The main challenge was to design a display for the clocks that could also become a transportation case for the 24 objects.

The exhibition has now opened in Montreal and will then travel in various countries across the world, including Singapore and the United States.

This scenography is focusing on both the technical aspect of a foldable display and the creation of a set associating Swiss cuckoo clocks' tradition with their new design possibilities.

The design of the five wood modules of this scenography is inspired from the shape of the chalet, which is the main figure of traditional cuckoo clocks. The chalet has also been a point of reference for choosing the materials. We decided to work with non-painted poplar wood usually used in the crafting of traditional cuckoo clocks.

The modules also have opened and closed windows in the same manner as traditional cuckoos do.

By adding those different house shaped walls in the space, the exhibition becomes a small cuckoo village where the visitors can freely wander. They can enjoy the sounds produced by all the clocks.

The foldable principle and the transport have been main considerations in the project and have had a big influence on the final shapes of the modules. The result is foldable three sided modules using hinges that also take an esthetical part in the project. Once folded, two of the modules are used to host the cuckoos in the thickness of their walls. All the folded modules can be placed on palettes, using very little space during transport. Thanks to a system of double panels that can turn inside out, there is no need to over protect the folded modules for their transportation.

All in all, designing this scenography was about finding the right balance between an atmosphere bringing together tradition and contemporary design, and answering to this very technical issue of an all-in-one itinerant scenography.

# 24 heures dans la vie d'un coucou suisse

# 24 Hours in the Life of a Swiss Cuckoo Clock

Le coucou suisse est-il un objet iconique seulement bon pour le folklore et le tourisme ?

La mécanique et le décor de cette petite horloge ont toujours été emblématiques du travail précis et méticuleux associé à l'image du savoir-faire helvétique. À l'origine, les coucous évoquaient l'aimable simplicité d'une vie agraire idéalisée dans un paysage alpestre, préservé des aléas du progrès.

Harry Lime joué par Orson Welles, dans *Le Troisième homme* de Carol Reed, formulait cette critique sans détour :

« In Italy for thirty years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder, bloodshed—but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love, 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce ?  
- The cuckoo clock. »

Quelques siècles plus tard, dans un monde régi par les lois du marché, dans une société où le design joue à parts égales avec l'art, que reste-t-il des coucous suisses ?

À l'invitation de Jean-Pierre Greff, Claudio Colucci a mis au défi les étudiant-e-s de la HEAD – Genève de les réinventer sur un mode contemporain tout en conservant la qualité principale du coucou traditionnel : raconter une histoire tout en égrenant les heures de leur chant régulier.

*24 heures dans la vie d'un coucou suisse* est un projet HEAD – Genève joué par 18 étudiant-e-s du Bachelor et Master Mode, bijoux et accessoires, du Master Media Design et du Master Espaces & Communication, et rejoint par six professeurs de l'école : James Auger, Marco Borracino, Claudio Colucci, Matali Crasset, Nitzan Cohen et Camille Scherrer.

La scénographie-boîte de transport présentée ici a été spécialement conçue par Marina Khémis et Shaima Abdelazim, Master Espaces & Communication.

Direction de projet : Jean-Pierre Greff  
Commissaire d'exposition : Alexandra Midal

Un projet orchestré par Mathieu Bassée et Fabio Colucci

The Swiss cuckoo clock – an iconic object fit only for folklore and tourists ?

The little clock's mechanism and appearance have always symbolized the precise, meticulous work associated with the image of Swiss know-how. Originally it summoned up the charming simplicity of idealized rural life in an Alpine landscape, safe from the vicissitudes of progress.

Harry Lime, played by Orson Welles in Carol Reed's *The Third Man*, said bluntly

« In Italy for thirty years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder, bloodshed – but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love, 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce?  
- The cuckoo clock. »

Centuries later, in a world ruled by market forces and a society where design is on a par with art, what place is left for the Swiss cuckoo clock ?

On the initiative of Jean-Pierre Greff, designer Claudio Colucci challenged students at HEAD — Genève to reinvent the cuckoo clock in a contemporary guise, while preserving the main quality of the traditional cuckoo clock, which is to tell a story while marking the passing hours with its regular song.

*24 Hours in the Life of a Swiss Cuckoo Clock* is a HEAD — Genève project involving eighteen Fashion, Jewellery and Accessories Bachelor's and Master's course students, Media Design Master's course students and Spaces & Communication Master's course students, as well as six HEAD teachers: James Auger, Marco Borracino, Claudio Colucci, Matali Crasset, Nitzan Cohen and Camille Scherrer.

The display system presented here, which folds into boxes for transport, was specially designed by Spaces & Communication Master's course students Marina Khémis and Shaima Abdelazim.

Project director: Jean-Pierre Greff  
Exhibition curator: Alexandra Midal

Project supervised by Mathieu Bassée and Fabio Colucci

# Placing the cuckoos

Each module of this scenography is unique, and was custom-designed for this very eclectic cuckoo series.

We carried out an important work on how to place the 24 cuckoos, knowing that each module was showing six cuckoos, with two cuckoos per wall side.

We chose this set-up for aesthetic but also technical reasons. We took into consideration the following criteria: electricity, display height, size, sound and associated objects. We created families of six cuckoos that would be displayed together, on the same module. We then adjusted different parameters such as: height, width, position and the size of the shelves and windows.

All the modules (except for the introduction one) are composed of two thick walls and one wall made of two wood panels. The two thick walls are hollow and include the power supply for all the electric cuckoos during the exhibition. Indeed some of the cuckoos are not mechanical and require electricity.



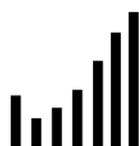
Electrical connection



Electrified wall socket



Non electrified wall socket



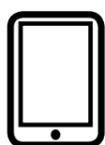
The object makes sound



Printed text



Printed image



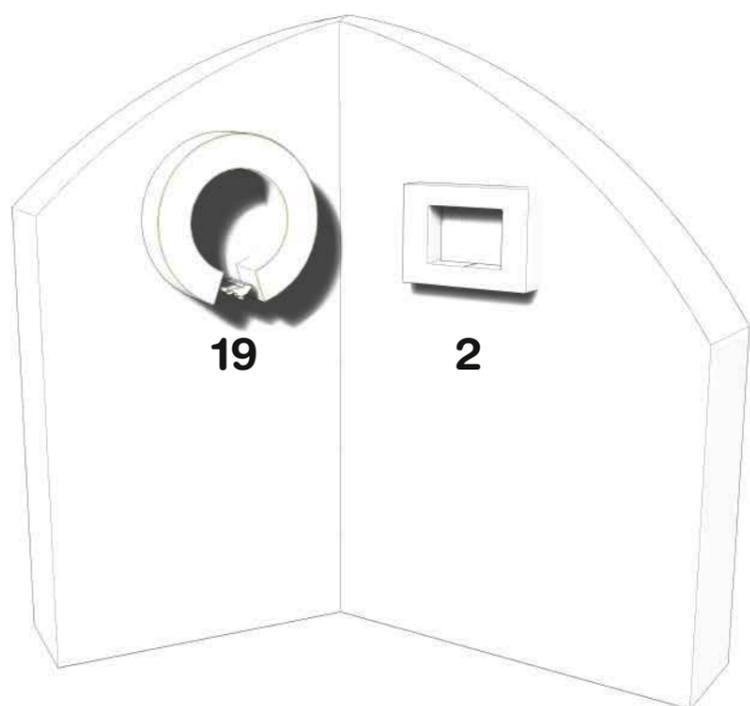
Video on Ipad



Fake Iphone

# Placing the cuckoos

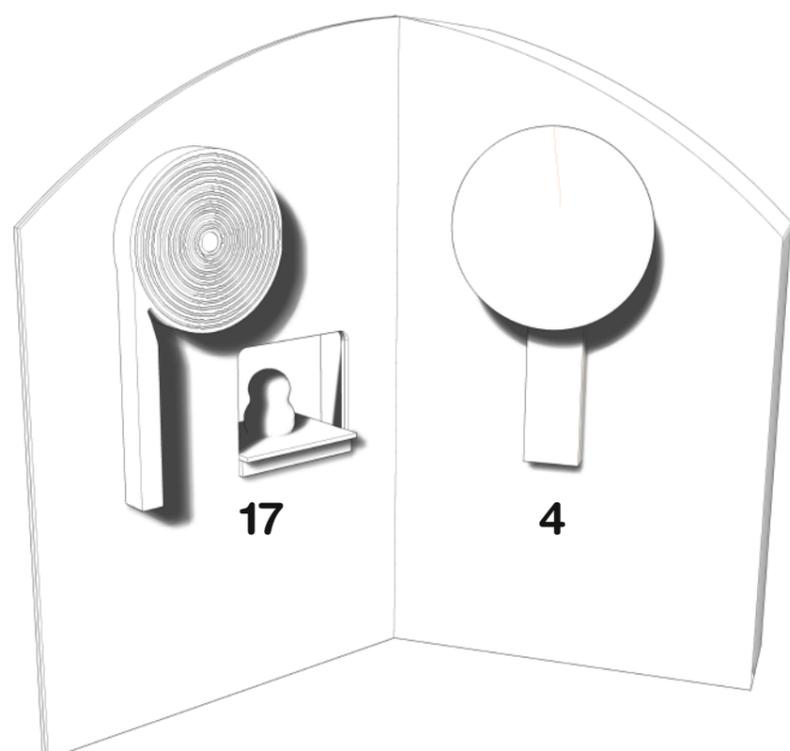
## MODULE A



**19.**  
Cuckoo Clock  
James Auger

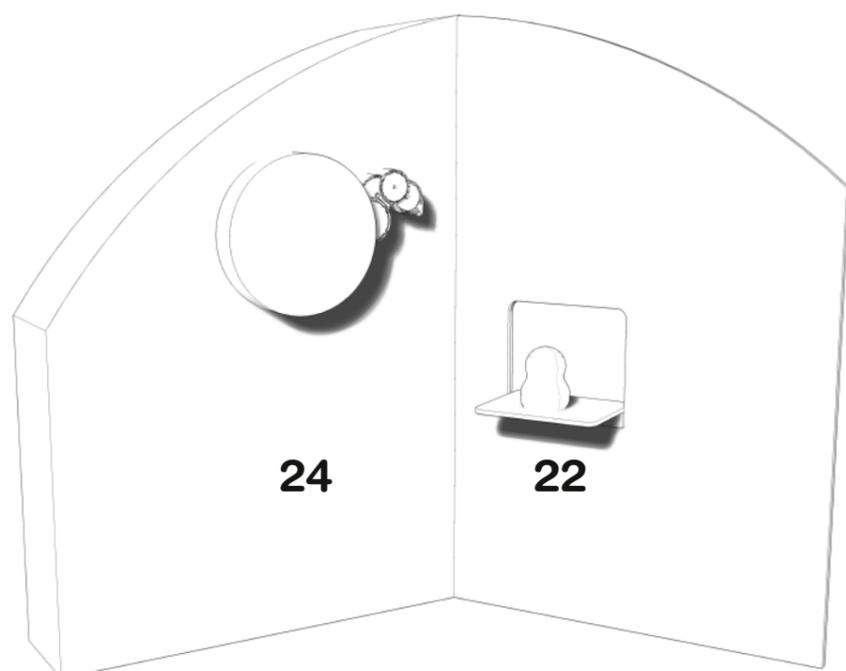
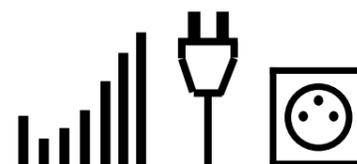


**2.**  
Le Temps d'un Vol  
Camille Dolls



**17.**  
Sémaphore  
Wendy Gaze

**4.**  
Papagei Clock  
Malak Mebkhout



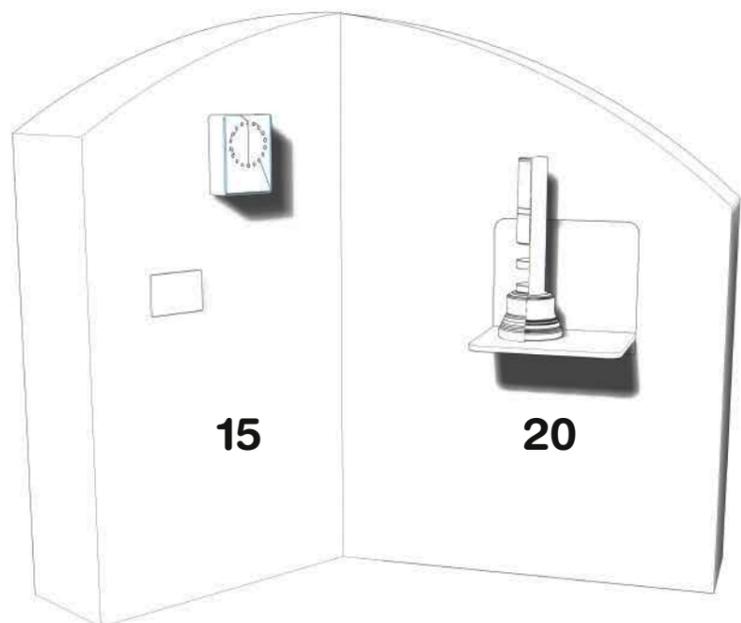
**24.**  
Cuckoo  
Nitzan Cohen

**22.**  
Fatbird  
Marco Borraccino



# Placing the cuckoos

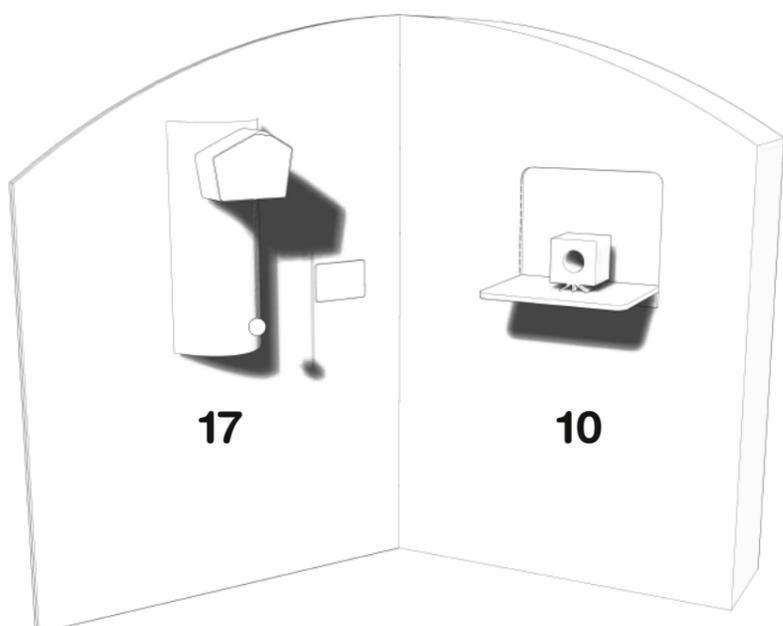
## MODULE B



**15.**  
CC Timer  
Alexandre Burdin



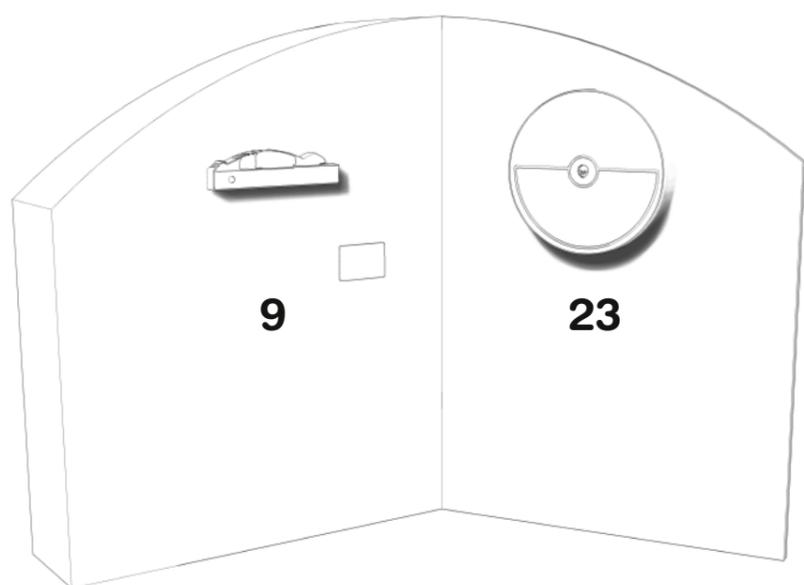
**20.**  
Coucous Time  
Matali Crasset



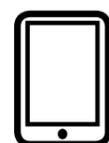
**17.**  
Coucous-Nest  
Nadège Dell'Omo  
Seigne  
et Noëllie  
Salguero-Hernandez



**10.**  
Watch the Birdie  
Céline Mosset



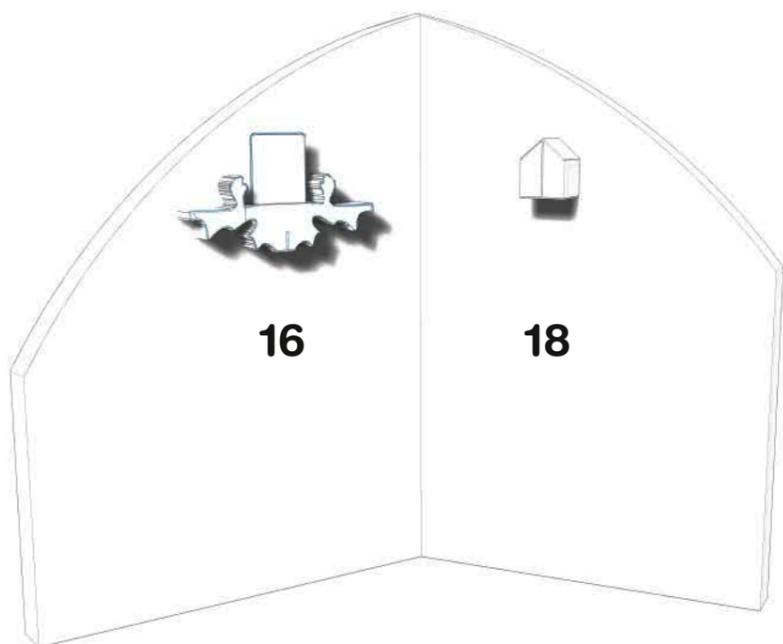
**9.**  
Coucou Genève  
Ophélie Sanga et  
Claire Bolay



**23.**  
Voyages Extraordinaires  
Claudio Colucci

# Placing the cuckoos

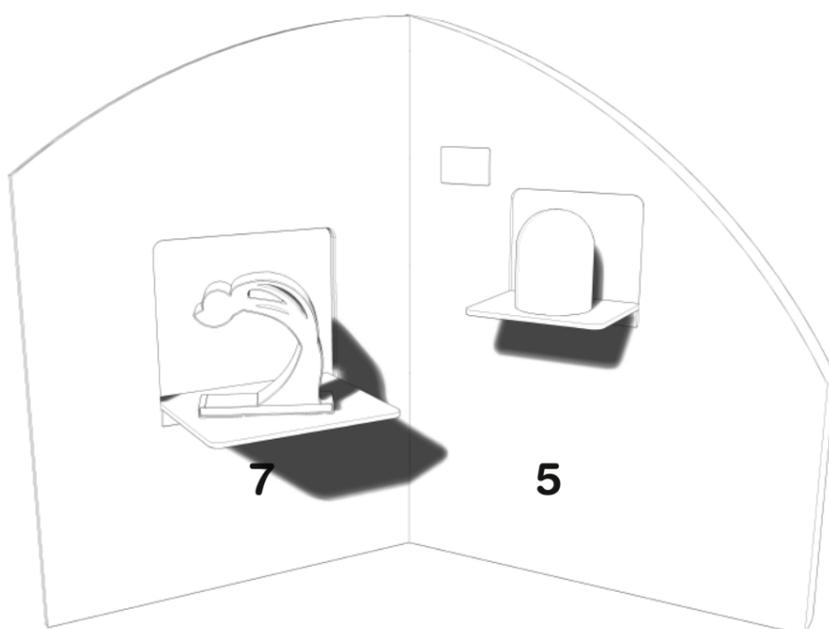
## MODULE C



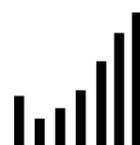
**16.**  
Peeping Clock  
Solkin Keizer



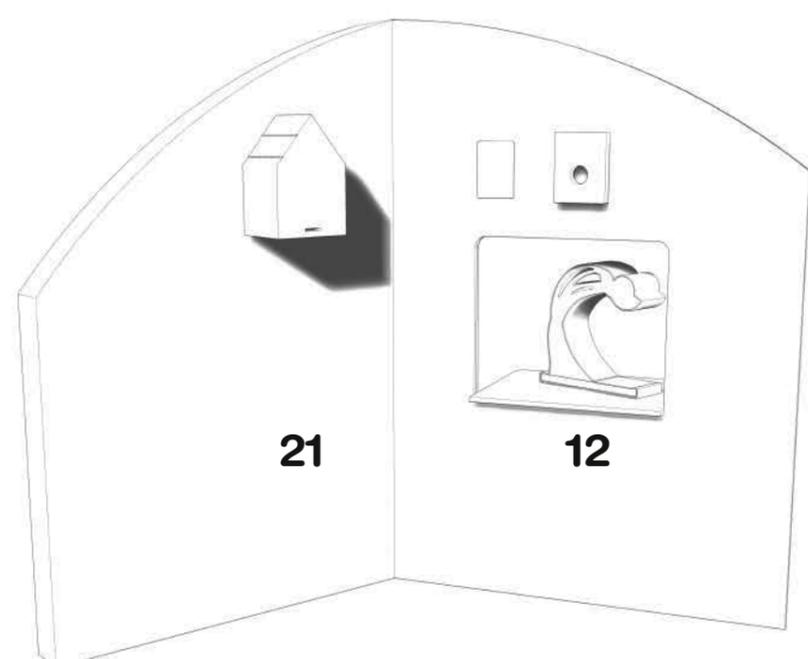
**18.**  
Swiss paradise  
Marie Ivof



**7.**  
Observing Time  
Nicolas Lafargue  
Mihaela Ciubutaru



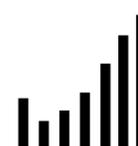
**5.**  
Coucou Bijou  
Mathilde Petit  
Roland Kawczynski



**21.**  
Follow the Birds  
Camille Scherrer

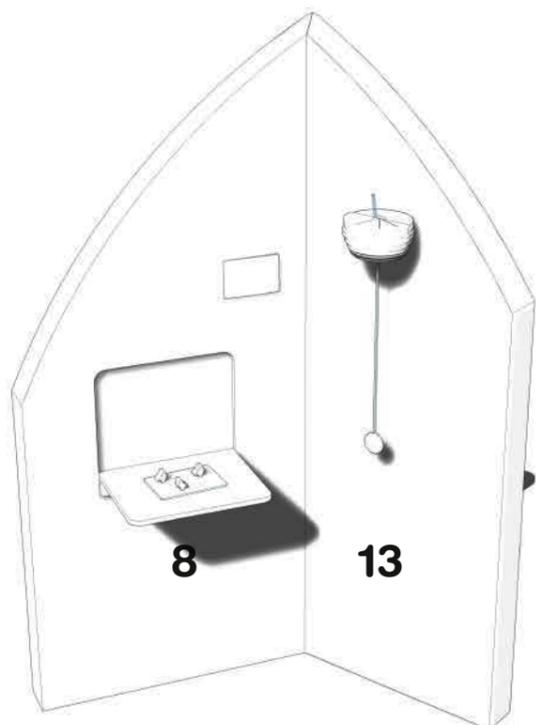


**12.**  
Paper Clock  
Benjamin Benkemoun

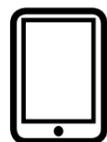


# Placing the cuckoos

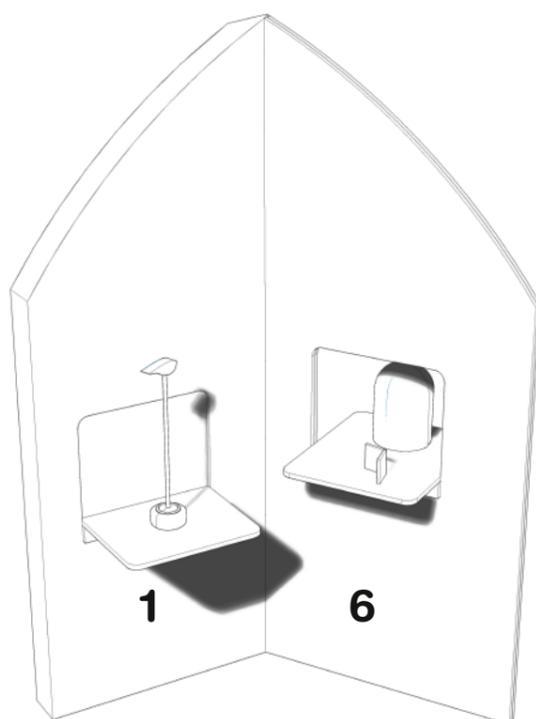
## MODULE D



**8.**  
Cuckoo Family  
Marine Sargent



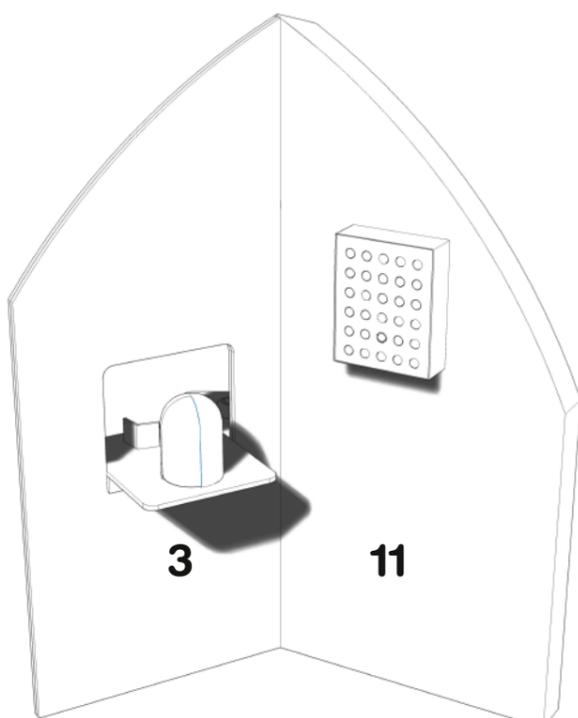
**13.**  
Back to the trees  
Clémentine Despoq



**1.**  
En vol  
Matthieu Pache



**6.**  
Koo3  
Arnaud Imobersteg

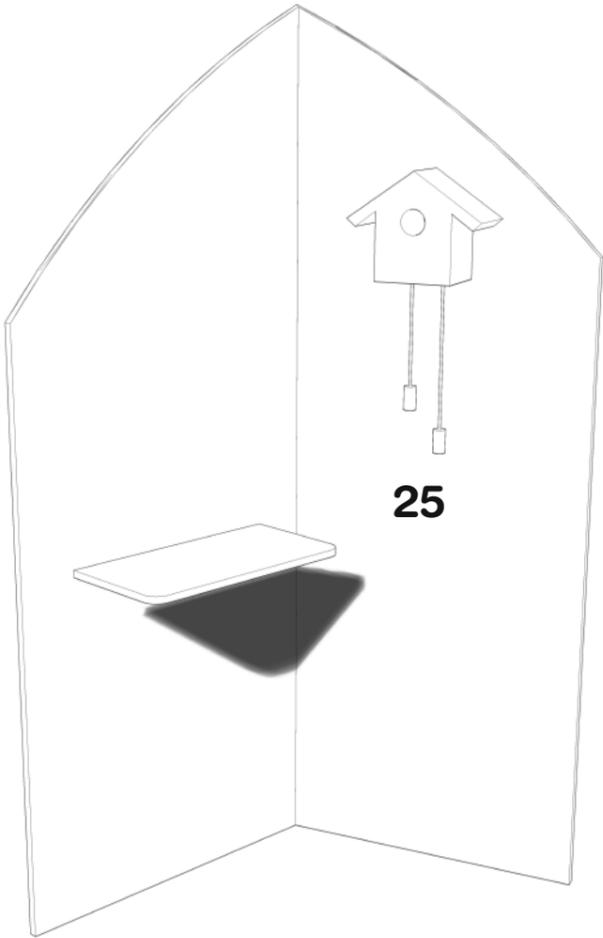


**3.**  
Bird Cage Clock  
Dorothee Loustalot

**11.**  
Serial Cuckoos  
Irène Gonet

# Placing the cuckoos

## MODULE E



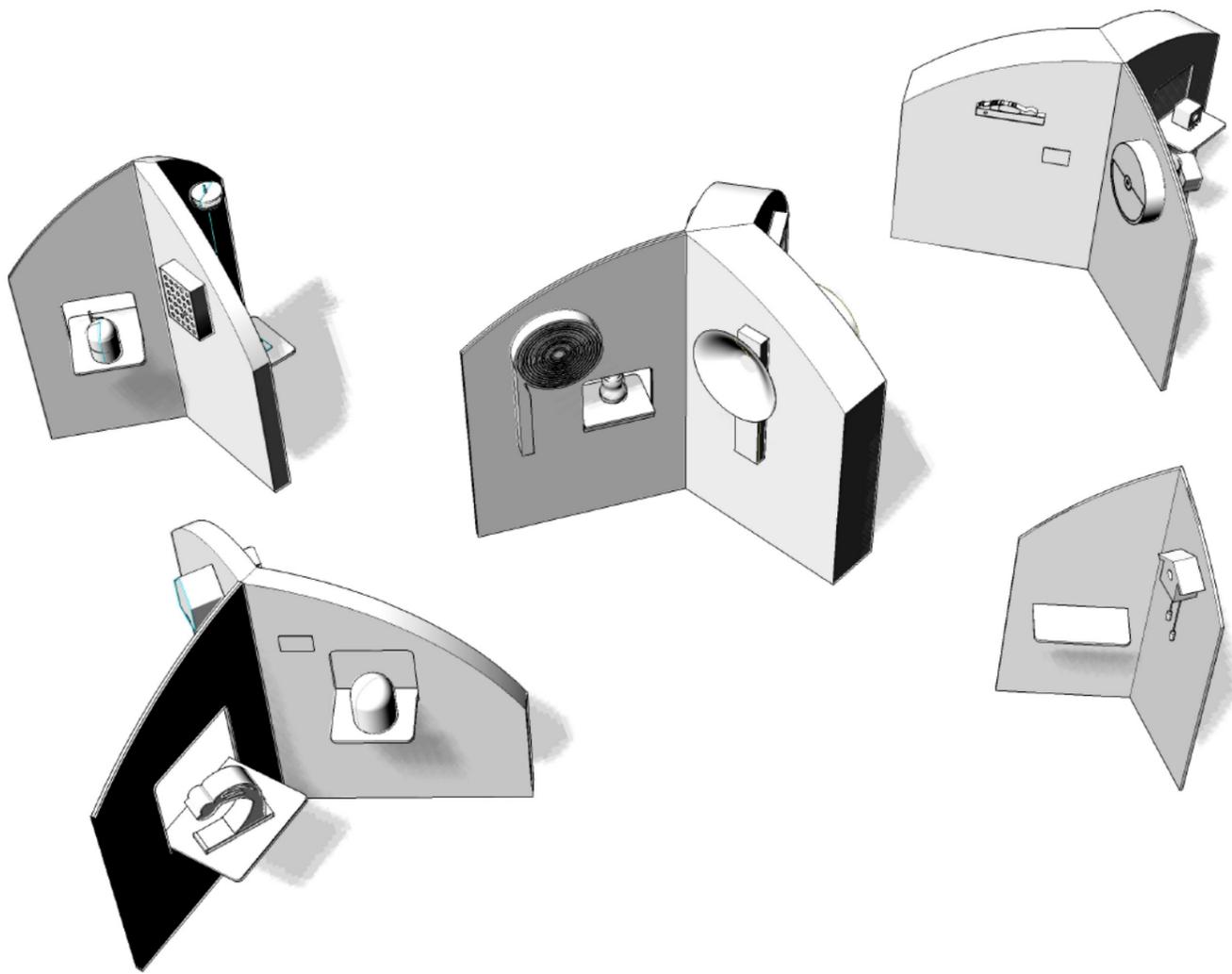
Shelf for the flyers

**25.**  
Traditionnal Cuckoo

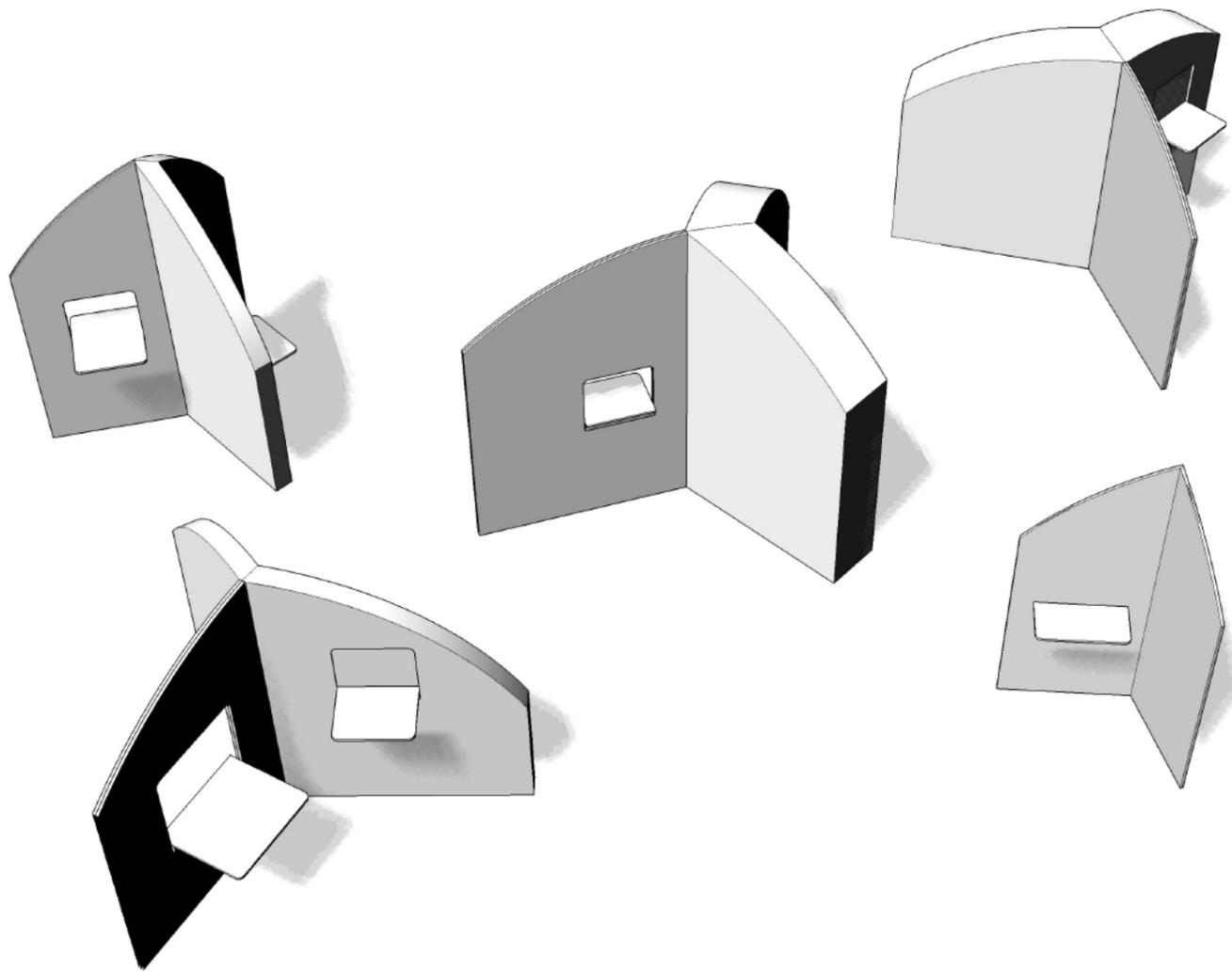
# The folding system



# The folding system



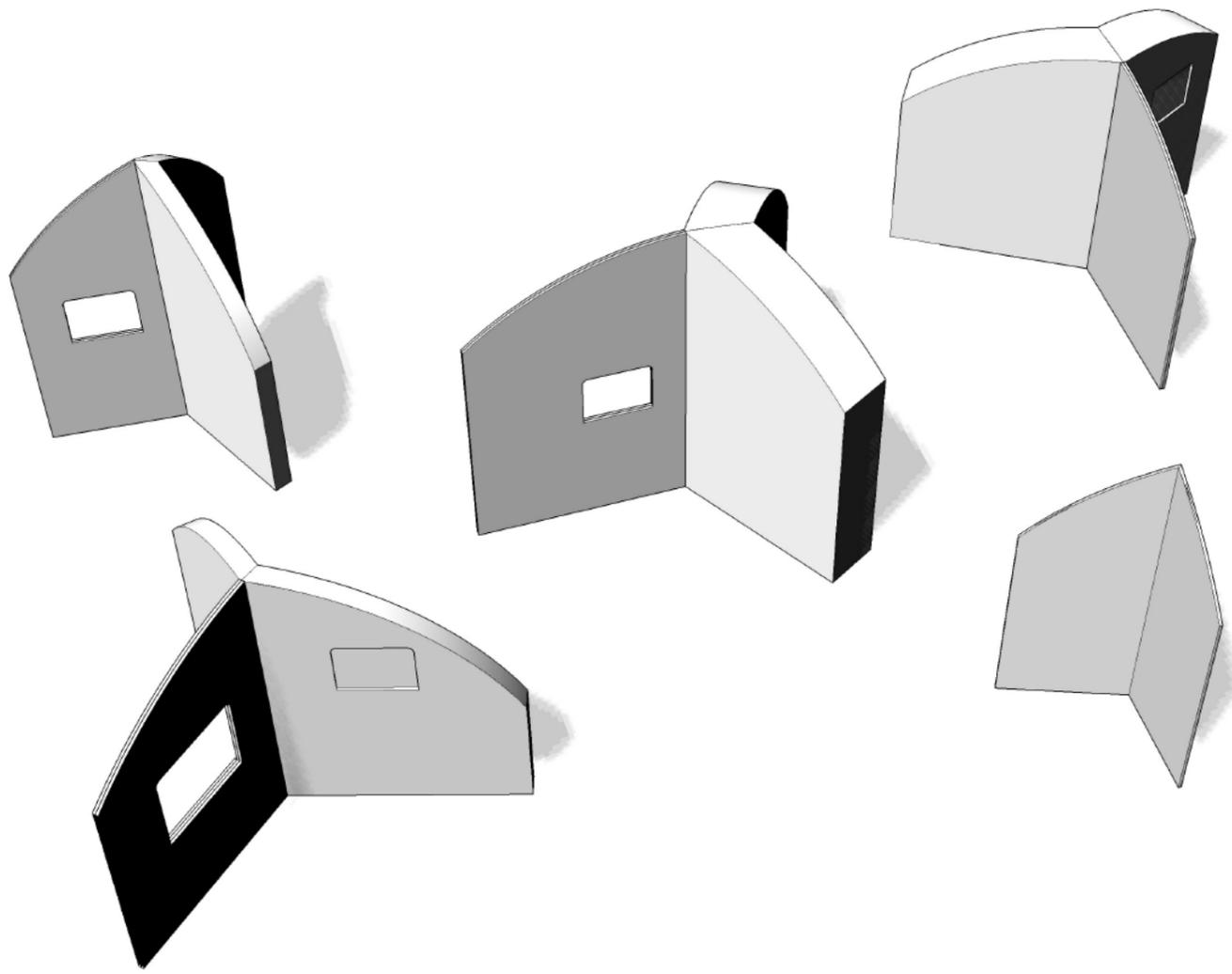
# The folding system



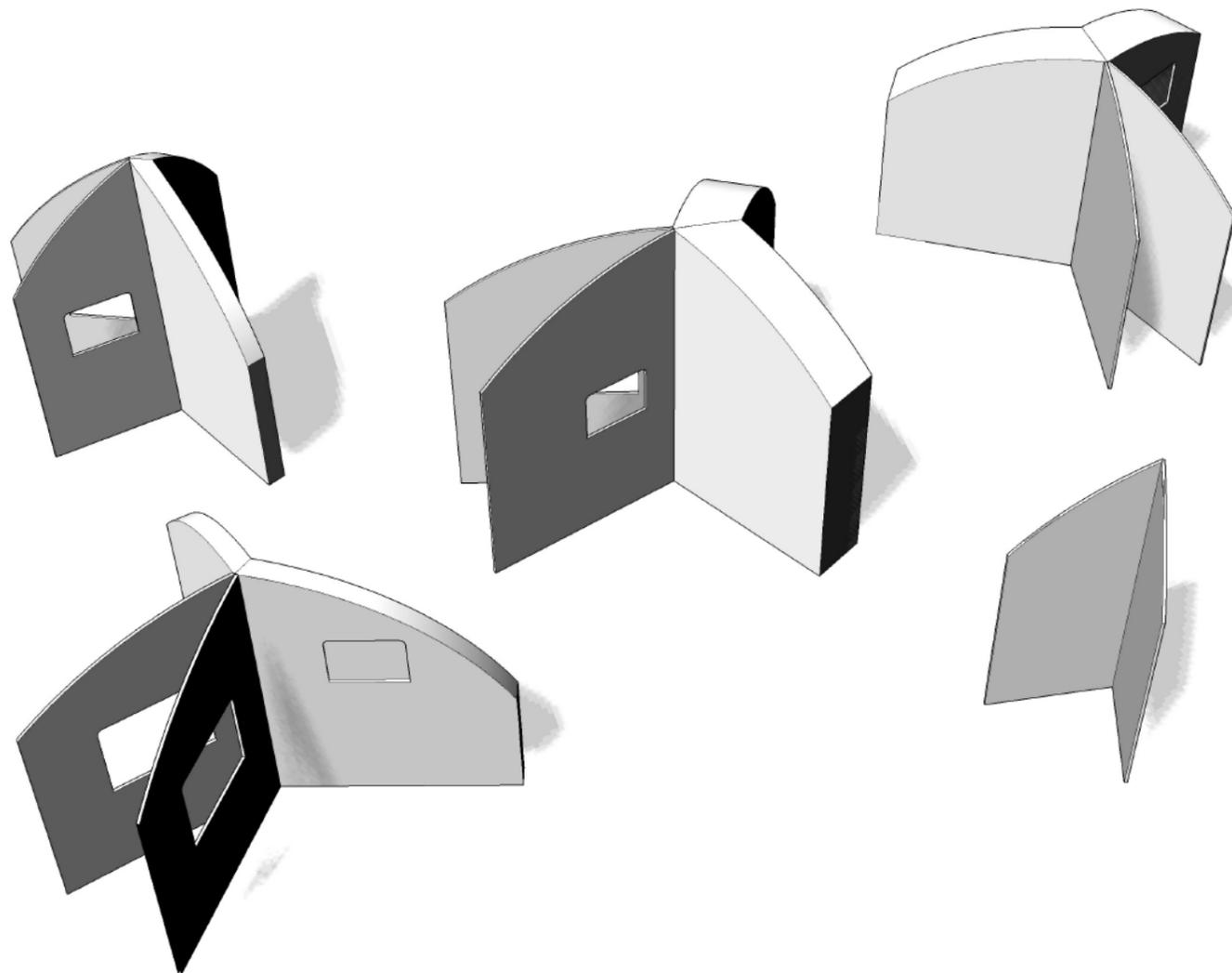
The windows in the modules refer to the traditional cuckoo going in and out of its window. The scenography reinterprets this traditional image with its opened and closed windows but also gives them a display purpose. Each window becomes indeed a support for a shelf. Closed windows are actually all the windows placed on thick walls. The shelves placed on closed windows can insure power supply to the object on it.

Opened windows are placed on double panel walls. They become an assembly system by enabling the two panels to stick together, and they are also a good way for highlight objects that are interesting to see from both sides.

# The folding system

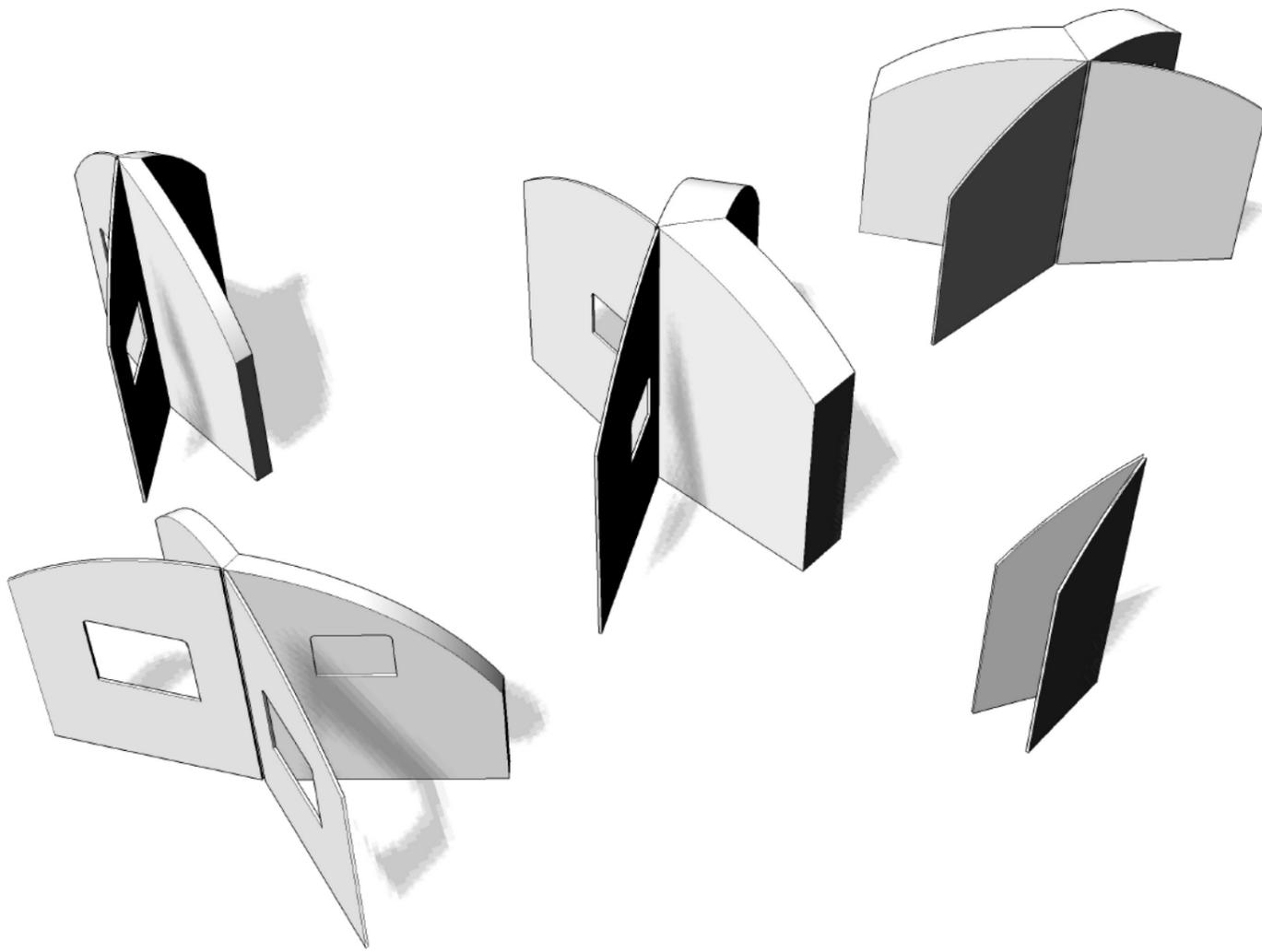


# The folding system

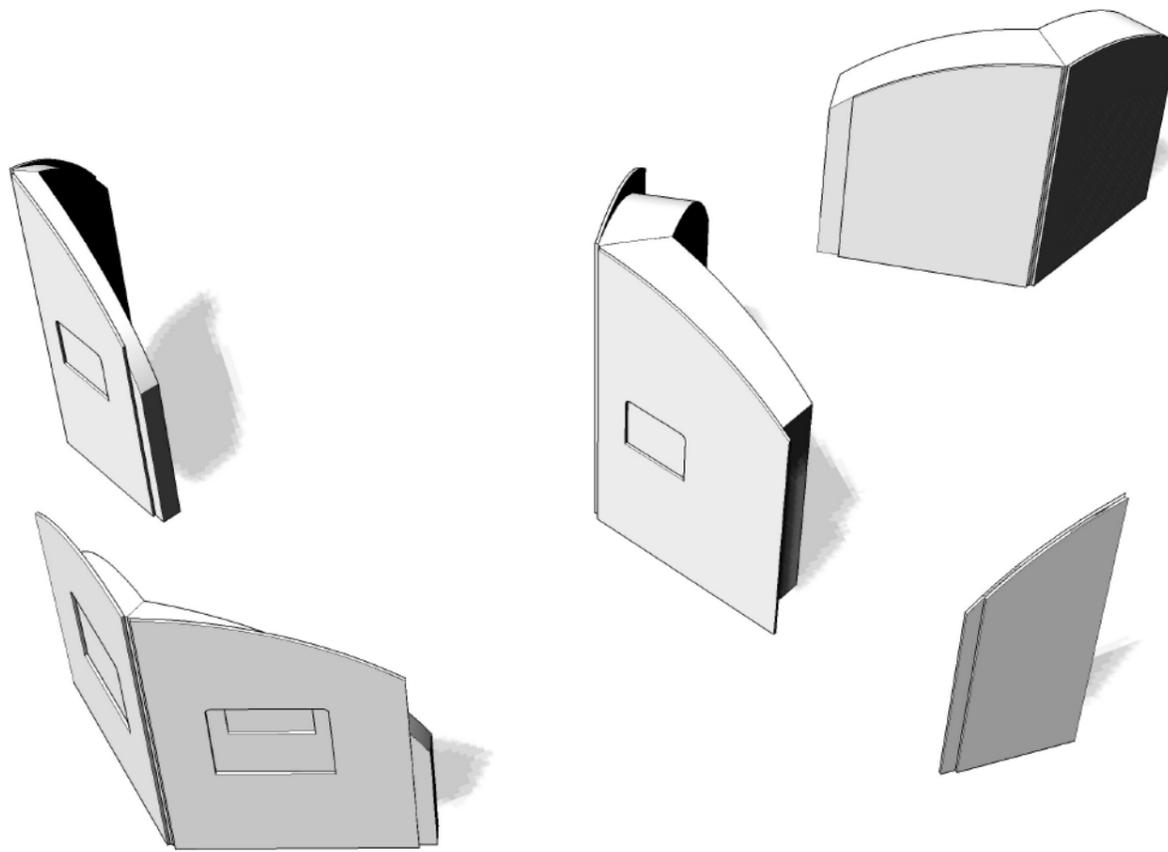


The third wall of the modules is made of two panels joined together and has a protection purpose. When a module is folded, those two panels are deployed on both sides of the thick walls to protect them. When the module opens, the two panels join and the parts that endured transport are placed against one another so that only the clean part can be seen.

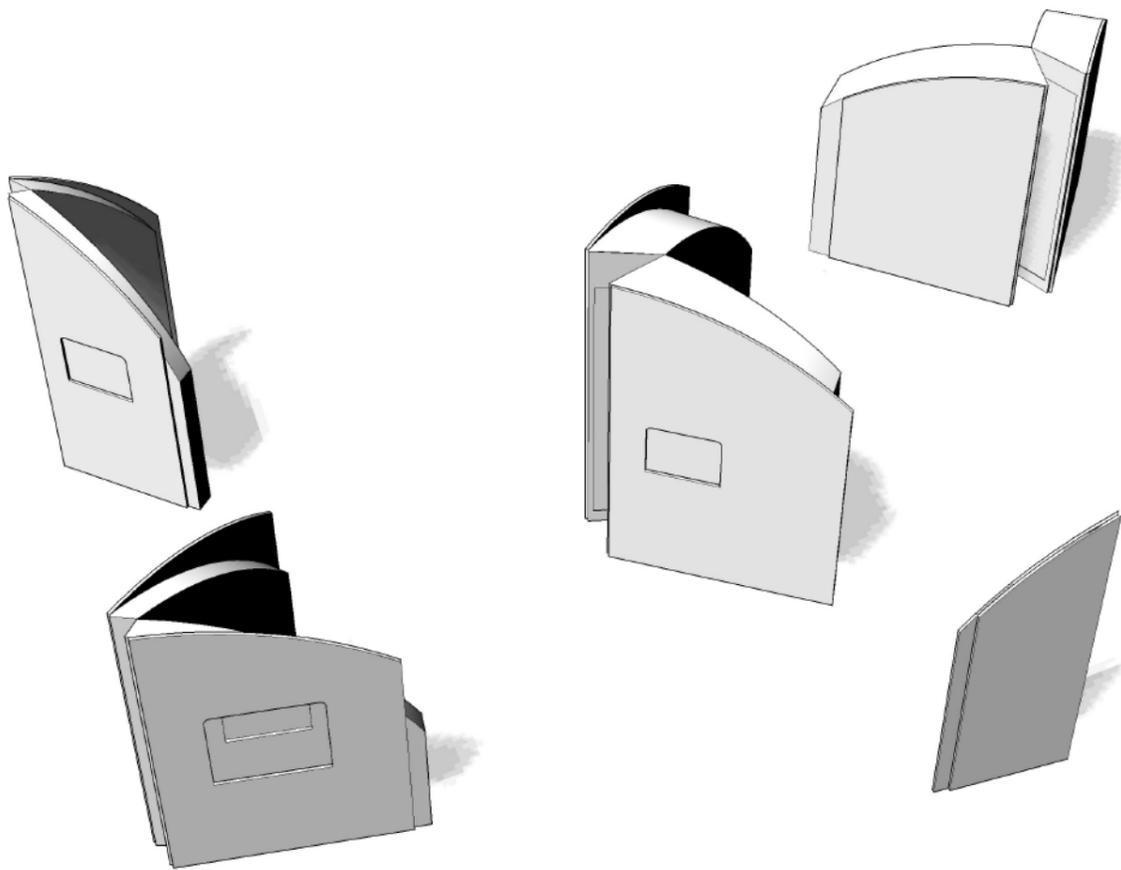
# The folding system



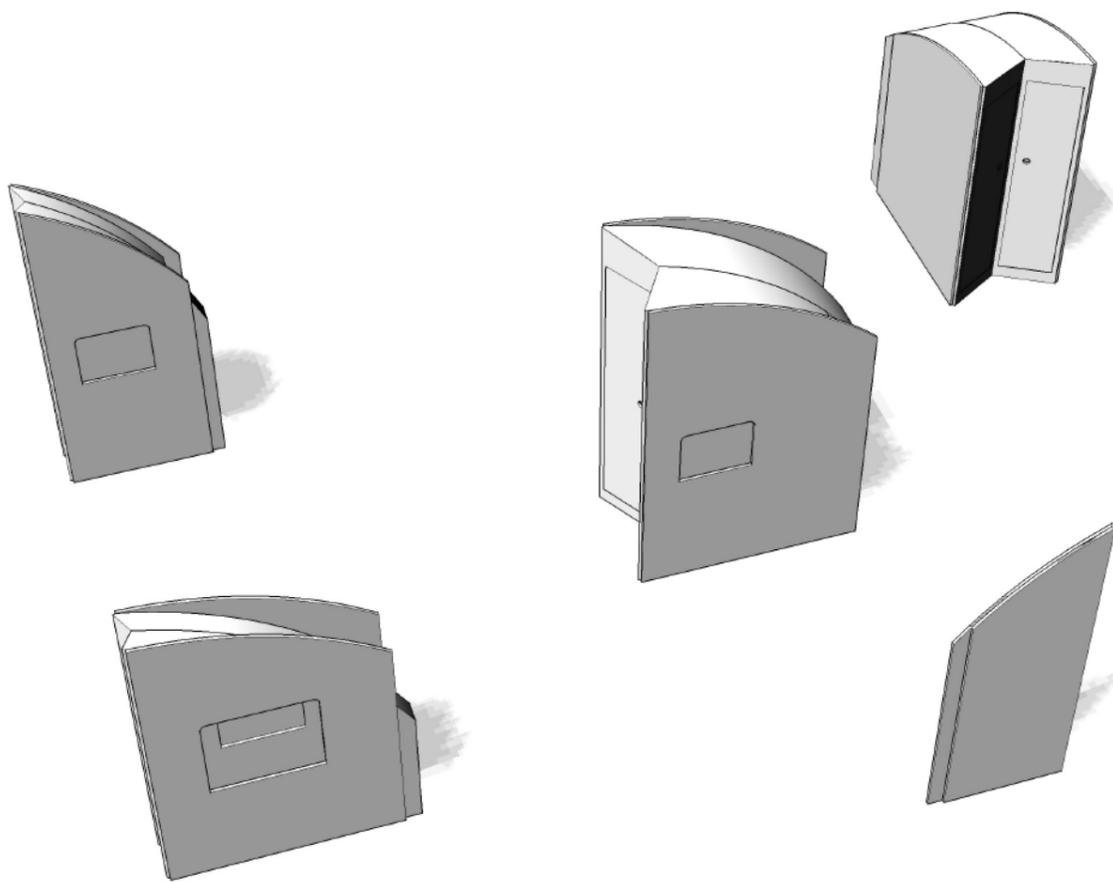
# The folding system



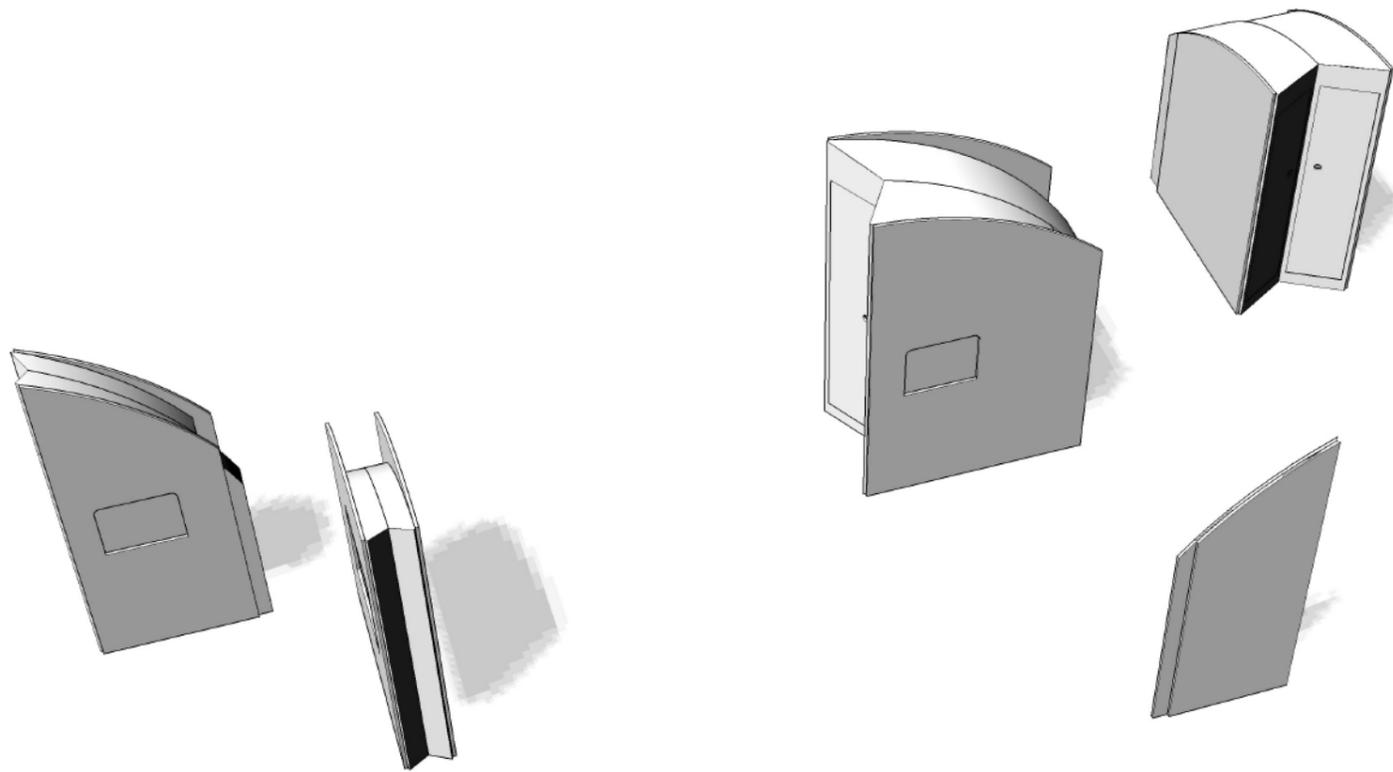
# The folding system



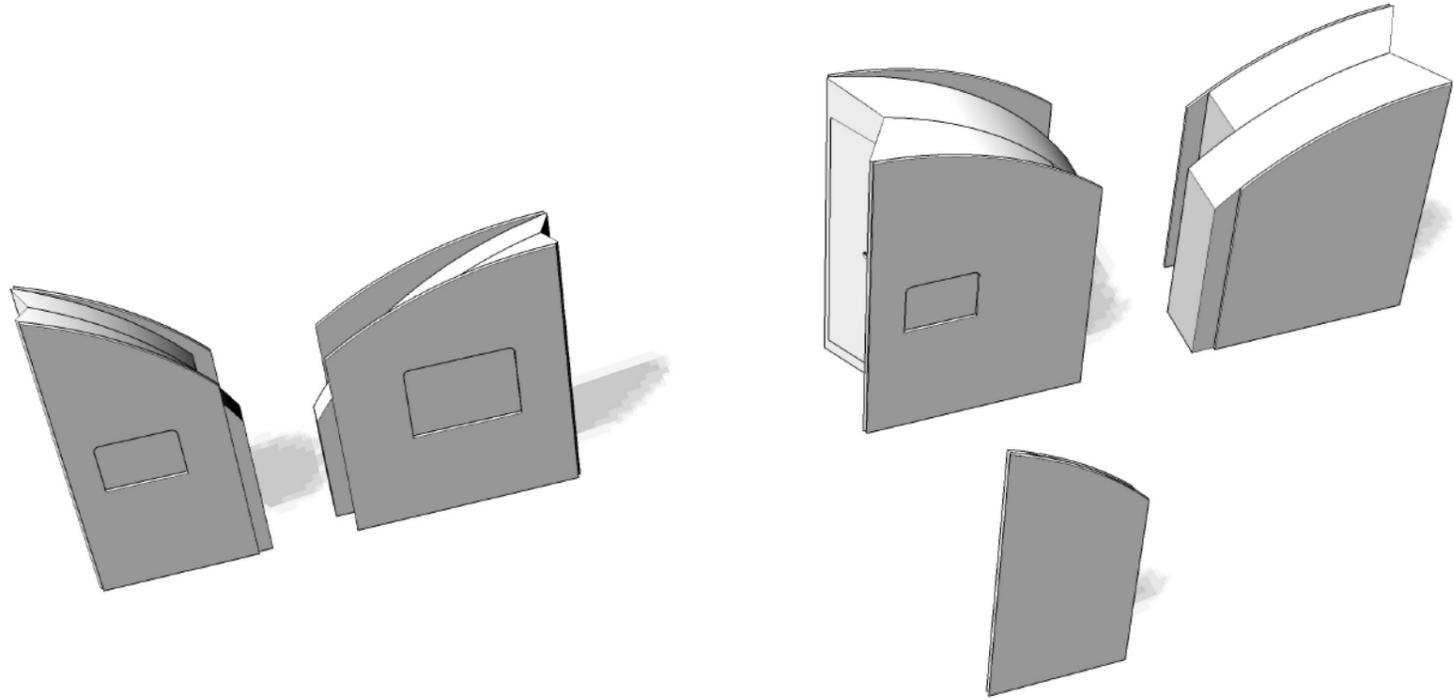
# The folding system



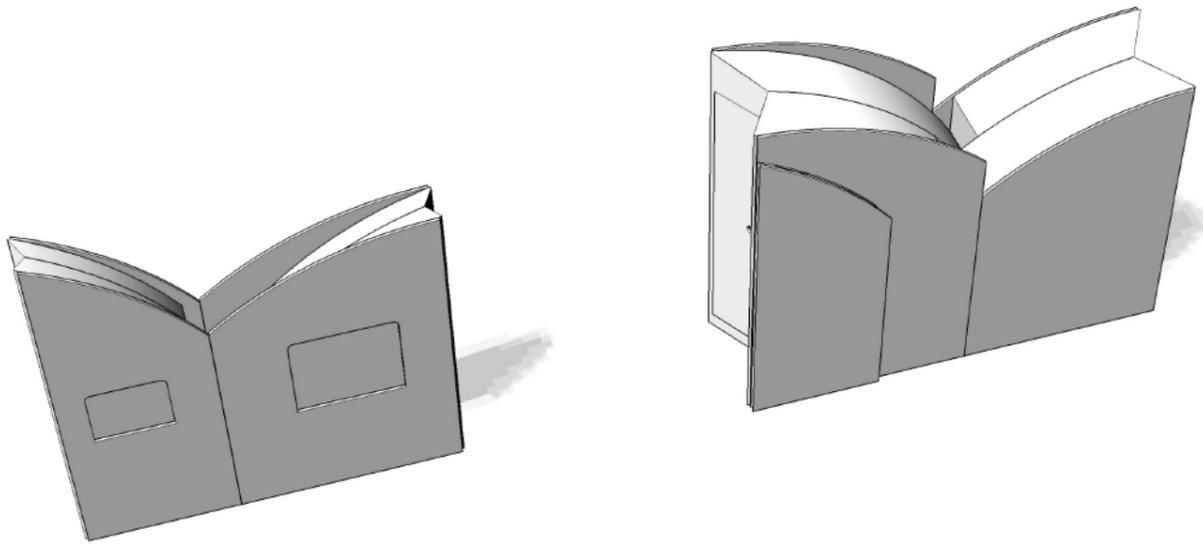
# The folding system



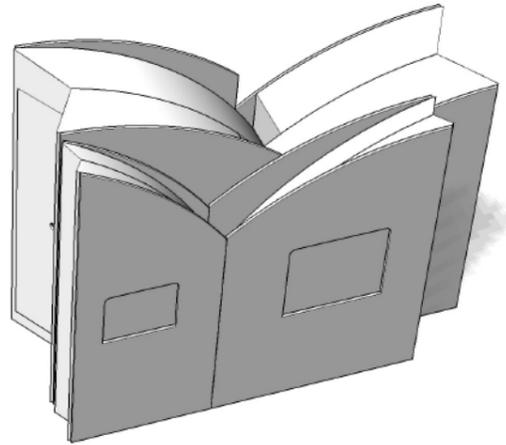
# The folding system



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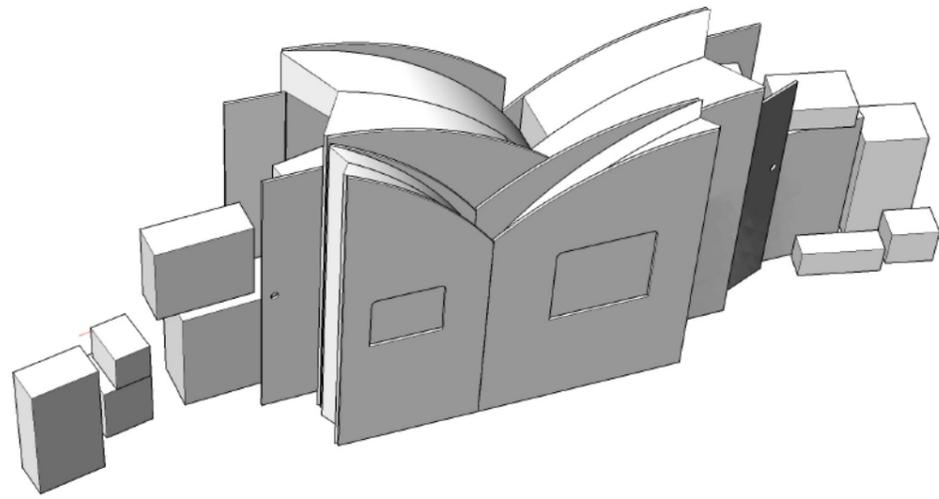


# The folding system

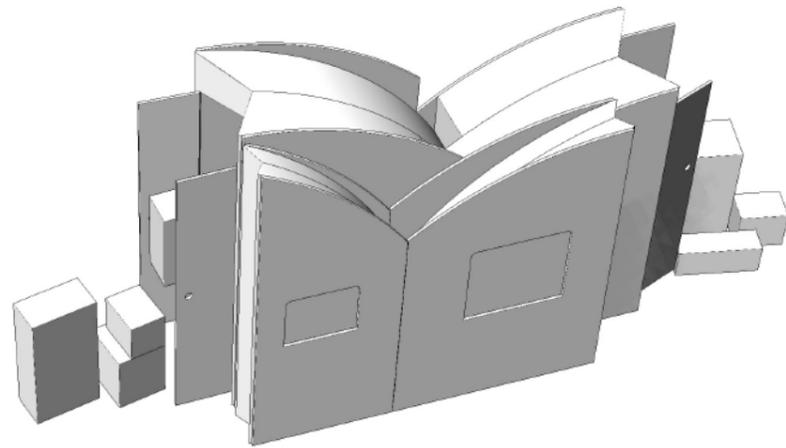


The folding principle of the modules is made in such way that the inside door of the thick walls can only be reached in the folded position. Once they are folded, the four three sided modules can form pairs in order to take as little space as possible.

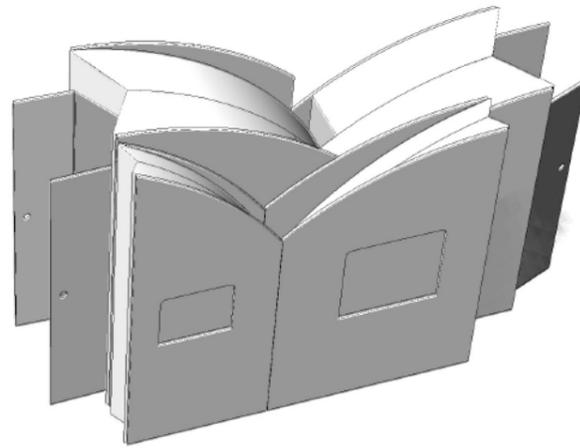
# The folding system



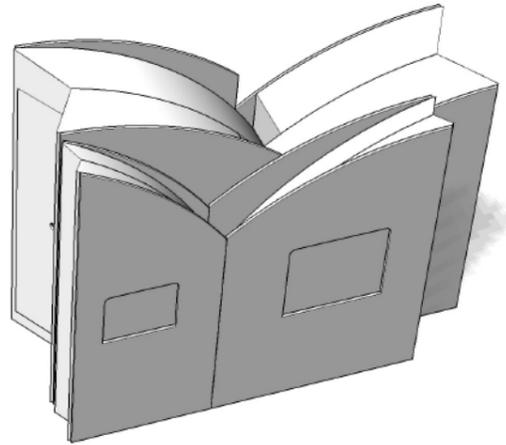
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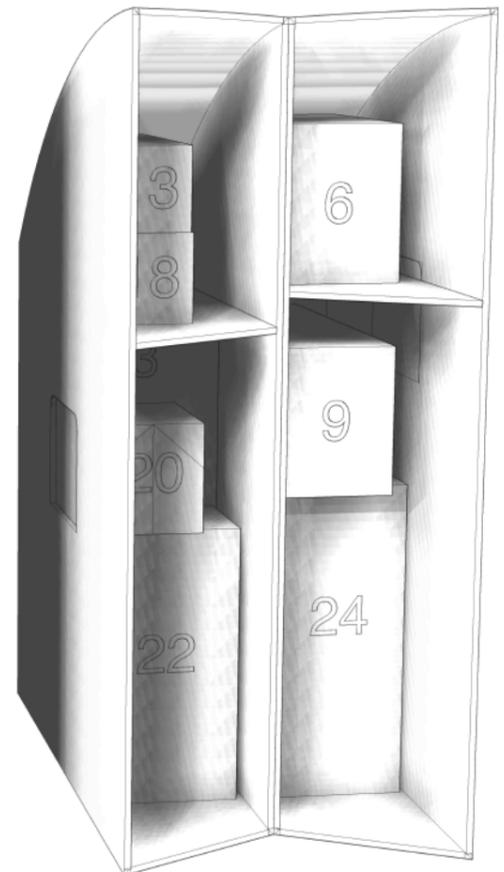
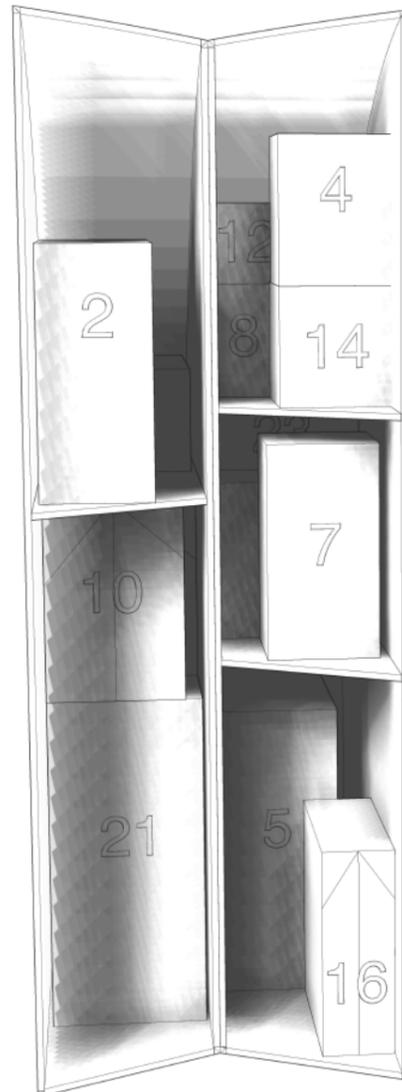


# The folding system



# The modules as a box

During transport, all the cuckoos are separated in boxes that can be placed inside fifty centimetres thick walls. By working with 3D software to precisely plan the arrangement of the 24 boxes in the walls, we managed to make them all fit within four thick walls, that is to say two modules. We were then able to reduce the wall thickness of the two other modules to fourteen centimetres, since their sole purpose was to insure power supply.







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